5. The desirability of utilising a fixed proportion of the revenues from each taluk for the requirements of that taluk.

Mr. Joseph Thomas (Member, Minachil Taluk) said that, while a large portion of the State revenue was being spent upon certain taluks of the State, certain other taluks, chiefly in North Travancore, were being neglected, as it were, by the Government, and their agricultural, educational, industrial and other needs were being but meagrely provided for. One of the pleas urged by the Government for not satisfying the requirements of the people was want of funds. The real reason for the neglect, however, was not far to seek. Those taluks whose needs were being attended to drew the attention of the Government over and over again to those needs and the result was the neglect of the other taluks. The complaint in question would not have arisen if a definite percentage of revenue derived from each taluk had been spent upon that taluk, expenditure on account of payments to the Palace and the British Government, etc., being borne by all the taluks alike. He was of opinion that the revenues and expenditure of each taluk should be shown separately in the budgets in future and that a committee should be appointed to formulate proposals for the equitable distribution of expenditure in proportion to the revenues contributed by the several taluks. He pointed out as an analogy the tendency in British India to grant autonomy to provincial Governments in regard to finance, and showed how step by step the central Government had been surrendering its financial control over the Provinces until each province secured the right to spend the major portion of its revenues on itself, the central Government being allowed to demand only a certain contribution from the provincial revenues. He said that Travancore might adopt the same course in the matter of the distribution of its expenditure among the various taluks of the State.

Lastly, he suggested that Advisory Boards consisting of elected and nominated members might be formed in each taluk to watch its needs and to offer their opinion in the preparation of the State budget.

Dewan's reply.—This is a subject which has been brought before the Assembly over and over again. The Member will excuse me if I say that he has exaggerated the so-called disabilities of certain taluks. Government do not make any distinction as between one taluk and another. The proposition that the expenditure should be allocated down to rupees, annas and pies among the various taluks in proportion to the revenue contributed by them is not one which will commend itself to this House as a whole. We have, no doubt, to remember the needs of the various parts of the country in distributing the expenditure, and Government, I believe, have been in the past paying and will continue in the future to pay due regard to the needs of the various parts of the country. Conditions must vary from place to place and it is not a matter of practical politics to lay down any hard and fast rule for the allocation of expenditure among the various taluks of the State. It will, however, be the earnest endeavour of Government to extend the benefits of the administration to places which do not now enjoy them in full measure.

6. Reduction of expenditure on the public service.

Mr. N. Madhavan Nair B. A. & B. L. (Member, Trivandrum Taluk) said that the increase in expenditure from 1095 to 1098 had been very abnormal, that there had not been any appreciable increase in the permanent and stable items of revenue, and that it had become imperative to curtail expenditure to avert Government drifting into bankruptcy. The necessity for the reduction of expenditure became all the more pressing, since additional taxation could not be contemplated, every source of revenue having been already tapped to its utmost capacity. He observed that the increased expenditure of the State was chiefly on the public services, due to the maintenance of costly departments of doubtful utility such as the Land Records Maintenance Department, the creation of several high-paid appointments such as that of the Land Revenue Commissioner, and the disproportionate and useless continuance of superfluous officers such as Assistant Superintendents of Police, several of the Assistant Excise Commissioners and the Personal Assistants sanctioned to certain officers. He was of opinion that the present increased expenditure could not be

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attributed, as advocated in the Dewan's opening Address, to the State having steadily extended its nation-building activities. The Member, referring to the Departments of Education, Public Works, Medical and Sanitary, Agriculture and Fisheries, and Industries, reiterated that the increased expenditure of the State was not due so much to the outlay incidental to the development of the State, as to the phenomenal increase under the items of salaries, establishments and allowances.

He also observed that the State services were overstaffed and overpaid, that it was necessary to reduce and equalise the scales of pay sanctioned to higher officers consistent with local requirements, and that the amount paid as travelling allowance to Government servants should be reduced immediately as had been done in other parts of India.

The Member suggested that, with a view to effect reduction of expenditure on the public service in all its details and to consider its ways and means, a strong committee of able and experienced men, consisting of a majority of non-officials, should be appointed, like the Geddes Committee of England and the Inchcape Committee of British India, in order to examine the existing sources of revenue, consider the proportion borne by recurring items of expenditure under salaries and establishments to the stable items of revenue, and decide how far that proportion could be reduced, so that funds might be found for expenditure in directions conducive to the material development of the country and its people. He observed that, though Government had of late effected a certain amount of retrenchment in some departments, yet the fact remained that side by side with that retrenchment several high appointments with large salaries had been created. He also stated that the scope and function of the Salaries Committee appointed by the Government were unduly limited, and that, therefore, the question of retrenchment should be considered afresh by a separate committee as suggested by him. He further represented that the appointment of a Committee of Ways and Means announced in the Dewan's opening Address at the seventeenth session of the Assembly, being a question of vital importance, might be taken up for consideration as early as possible.

Dewan's reply.—I do not propose to make any reply to your speech, because the reply to that speech will be found in the pronouncements I have already made on various occasions including the one I made in my Address yesterday. I am afraid you are not going to be convinced by any reply that I may give; nor do I stand convinced by your arguments. All that I can say at present is that we have not said the last word on retrenchment. Retrenchment is not a thing about which it can at any time be said: "Thus far and no further". There may be directions in which we may be able to retrench in future. It is not a matter on which we can dogmatise or which we can anticipate. I may, however, assure you that it is the constant aim of the Government to reduce expenditure as far as possible.

7. Retrenchment in the public service.

Mr. A. Nayanar B. A. & B. L. (Member, Municipal Council, Nagercoil) expressed satisfaction at the retrenchment effected by the Government in the number of officers, in connection with the disposal of the Salaries Committee's Report. He observed that the reduction of the salaries of officers, as advocated by many, would prejudicially affect the quality and tone of the public service; but he thought that further reduction in the number of higher officers was possible to some extent. In the General and Revenue Secreteriat, one more Secretary might be reduced, by appointing the Chief Engineer as the P. W. D. Secretary, as in Madras and the Central Provinces.

Turning to the Land Revenue Department, the Member was of opinion that, since a high-paid Commissioner had been appointed, the post of Division Peishkars might be abolished, and that, in the place of Division Assistants, four Assistant Commissoners of Revenue and four District Magistrates might be appointed on the present pay of Division Assistants. He observed that, by the above arrangement not only would the revenue and the criminal administration become more efficient, but also

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